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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 06 ROME 001658

SIPDIS

FROM FODAG

STATE FOR IO/EDA WINNICK AND KOTOK  
USDA/FAS FOR REICH AND HUGHES  
MEXICO CITY FOR BRAKEL

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: FAO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE 17TH SESSION  
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11. SUMMARY. THE 17TH SESSION OF THE UN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO) COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE (COAG) MET MARCH 31 - APRIL 4, 2003. COAG PROVED ONCE AGAIN TO BE THE MOST POLITICIZED OF FAO'S TECHNICAL COMMITTEES. ONLY ONE AGENDA ITEM RATED CONSENSUS ENDORSEMENT; THE REMAINDER WERE EITHER SENT BACK FOR RE-WRITING OR VIEWED AS TOO FLAWED TO WARRANT AN UNQUALIFIED ENDORSEMENT. THE AGENDA, LARGELY SET BY THE SECRETARIAT, PITTED CAIRNS GROUP COUNTRIES (AND THE U.S.) AGAINST EU MEMBERS ON "THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE" (UNDER THE "THE FOOD CHAIN" ITEM) AND "MULTIFUNCTIONALITY" (UNDER "GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES"). NON-CAIRNS GROUP G-77 MEMBERS SAVED THEIR FIRE FOR THE WHO/FAO REPORT ON DIET ON NUTRITION, EXPRESSING CONCERN THAT RECOMMENDATIONS ON SUGAR INTAKE WOULD HAVE A DELETERIOUS EFFECT ON SUGAR PRODUCING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND REQUESTING THE REPORT BE CONSIDERED AT THE NEXT COAG. LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEXT BIENNIUM'S PROGRAM OF WORK, DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WERE ABLE TO RALLY AROUND THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN FUNDING FOR THE PLANT HEALTH STANDARD-SETTING WORK OF THE INTERIM COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES (ICPM). U.S. AND AUSTRALIAN EFFORTS TO CURTAIL FUNDING OF THE CONTROVERSIAL "FOOD CHAIN" PROGRAM SHOULD SEND A SIGNAL TO THE SECRETARIAT THAT FAO SHOULD FOCUS ON BOTTOM-UP AGRICULTURAL INITIATIVES, RATHER THAN CHURNING OUT GLOBAL "FRAMEWORKS" AND "STRATEGIES." END SUMMARY.

12. THE 17TH SESSION OF THE FAO COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE (COAG) MET IN ROME MARCH 31 - APRIL 4, 2003. ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY FAO MEMBERS PARTICIPATED IN THE MEETING. THE  
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AGENDA INCLUDED: A PROPOSAL ON "FAO'S STRATEGY TOWARDS A FOOD CHAIN APPROACH FOR FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY"; A PROPOSAL ON "A FRAMEWORK FOR GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES"; FURTHER WORK ON THE FAO "BIOSECURITY" PROPOSAL (FIRST INTRODUCED AT THE LAST COAG); THE PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION REPORT, MEDIUM TERM PLAN AND BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR THE BIENNIUM 2004-2005. A SUMMARY OF THE WHO/FAO STUDY ON DIET AND NUTRITION APPEARED AS AN INFORMATION ITEM. SIDE EVENTS OF NOTE INCLUDED A DYNAMIC (AND VERY POSITIVE) PRESENTATION FROM FAO'S INTERDEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP ON BIOTECHNOLOGY.

13. THE U.S. DELEGATION WAS HEADED BY AMBASSADOR TONY HALL AND COMPRISED THE FOLLOWING DELEGATES: ADELA BACKIEL, DIRECTOR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, USDA; BOBBY RICHEY, DIRECTOR, FOOD SAFETY AND TECHNICAL SECURITY, FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE (FAS), USDA; RICHARD HUGHES, USDA/FAS; SHARON KOTOK, FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICER, OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE; RALPH CUMMINGS, SENIOR ECONOMIST, BUREAU OF ECONOMIC GROWTH, AGRICULTURE AND TRADE, USAID AND U.S. MISSION REPRESENTATIVES LUCY TAMLYN AND KATIE NISHIURA. THE REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA CHAIRED THE MEETING. THE U.S. REPRESENTED NORTH AMERICA ON THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE AND CHAIRED THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2000-2001  
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14. THE FAO DIRECTOR OF PROGRAM PLANNING AND BUDGET ADVISED DELEGATES THAT THE PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION REPORT (PIR) WAS IN THE PROCESS OF BEING REVISED. MEMBERS  
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WELCOMED NEWS OF AN IMPROVED REPORTING FORMAT BASED ON A NEW RESULTS-BASED PROGRAMMING MODEL WHICH WILL ENABLE MEMBERS TO BETTER ASSESS FAO'S PERFORMANCE AND UNDERSTAND THE LINKAGES BETWEEN ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROGRAM PRIORITIES. IN REVIEWING PAST YEARS' PROGRAMS, MEMBERS HIGHLIGHTED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD-SETTING BODIES, SUCH AS THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS AND INTERNATIONAL PLANT PROTECTION CONVENTION (IPPC) AND TRADE-RELATED CAPACITY BUILDING.

MEDIUM TERM PLAN AND PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS FOR WORK AND BUDGET 2004-2005  
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15. AMBASSADOR TONY P. HALL DELIVERED THE U.S. INTERVENTION ON THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN 2004-2009 AND THE PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS ON THE PROGRAM OF WORK AND BUDGET, 2004-2005. THE U.S. STATEMENT EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE

OF FAO DEPLOYING ITS LIMITED RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY IN  
SUPPORT OF GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY AND ASSISTING POOR  
FARMERS IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY AND INCOMES. IT UNDERScored  
THE IMPORTANCE OF ADDRESSING THE SERIOUS IMPACT OF  
HIV/AIDS ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY, PARTICULARLY IN  
AFRICA AND STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WTO-RECOGNIZED

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ACTION IO-00

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R 171333Z APR 03  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9321  
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SIPDIS

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STATE FOR IO/EDA WINNICK AND KOTOK  
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FOOD SAFETY AND PLANT HEALTH STANDARD SETTING BODIES AND  
OF SUPPORT FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY TO MEET GLOBAL FOOD  
PRODUCTION NEEDS.

16. AS IN OTHER FAO COMMITTEES, MEMBERS WELCOMED THE  
OPPORTUNITY TO EXAMINE THE BUDGET PROPOSALS IN ADVANCE OF  
THE FAO COUNCIL. DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (CHINA, INDIA,  
INDONESIA, ZIMBABWE) EXPRESSED STRONG SUPPORT FOR FAO'S  
SPECIAL PROGRAM FOR FOOD SECURITY (SPFS), CALLING IT  
"VERY USEFUL" (INDONESIA) AND "PRODUCING TANGIBLE  
RESULTS" (CHINA). MOST DEVELOPING COUNTRIES EMPHASIZED  
THE NEED FOR GREATER CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING. THE  
REPUBLIC OF KOREA SUPPORTED A ZERO REAL GROWTH (ZRG)  
BUDGET, BUT NOTED THAT ZRG DIDN'T HAVE TO MEAN "NO  
GROWTH" FOR IMPORTANT PROGRAMS SUCH AS THE INTERIM  
COMMISSION ON PHYTOSANITARY MEASURES (ICPM). DEVELOPED  
AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ALIKE EXPRESSED THE NEED FOR  
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE ICPM'S WORK PROGRAM.

SETTING PRIORITIES - WHOSE JOB?

17. IN HIS INTRODUCTION TO THE MEDIUM TERM PLAN AND THE  
BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2004-2005, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAM  
BUDGET AND PLANNING, TONY WADE, ARGUED THAT REAL BUDGET  
INCREASES WERE NEEDED IN ORDER TO SATISFY ALL THE NEEDS  
IDENTIFIED BY MEMBERS. HE COMMENTED THAT, SINCE MEMBERS  
WERE UNABLE TO PRIORITIZE (AND THE SECRETARIAT COULD  
NOT), THE ONLY SOLUTION WAS FOR MEMBERS TO LOBBY THEIR  
AUTHORITIES TO APPROVE A REAL GROWTH BUDGET.

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COMMENT: OECD MEMBERS WERE UNIFORMLY UNHAPPY WITH THE  
SECRETARIAT'S STATEMENT; THE EU INTERVENED A SECOND TIME

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TO STATE THAT THE SECRETARIAT SHOULD TAKE A MORE ACTIVE  
ROLE IN GUIDING MEMBERSHIP IN SETTING PRIORITIES.  
IRONICALLY, THE ONE PROGRAM INDICATED BY USDEL AND  
AUSTRALIA AS LOW PRIORITY (THE ETHICS PROGRAM) WAS SAVED  
AFTER FRANTIC SECRETARIAT LOBBYING ON THE FLOOR SUCCEEDED  
IN PERSUADING A MEMBER (COSTA RICA) TO SUPPORT IT. END  
COMMENT.

GLOBAL FORUM ON FOOD SAFETY REGULATORS

18. UNDER THE PROGRAM OF WORK AND BUDGET, MEMBERS ALSO  
DISCUSSED THE POSSIBILITY OF CONVENING IN 2004 (IN A  
DEVELOPING COUNTRY) A SECOND GLOBAL FORUM OF FOOD SAFETY  
REGULATORS WHICH WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE STANDARD-SETTING  
WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION. FUNDING WOULD  
BE REQUIRED.

FOOD CHAIN STRATEGY

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19. THE FAO INTRODUCED ITS "STRATEGY FOR A FOOD CHAIN APPROACH FOR FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY." THE ITEM ORIGINATED IN THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY IN 2002 WHICH HAD REQUESTED THAT COAG OUTLINE FAO'S STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS KEY POLICY ADVICE, CAPACITY BUILDING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND ACTIONS THAT NEED TO BE TAKEN AT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS FOR  
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ENSURING ACCESS TO SAFE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD. MANY COUNTRIES EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE FAO PAPER SIGNIFICANTLY ENLARGED AND ALTERED THE ORIGINAL CFS REQUEST (NOT LEAST BEING TO ADD "QUALITY"). THE U.S. RAISED CONCERNS ABOUT THE PROCESS USED TO ARRIVE AT THE APPROACH AND THE USE OF VAGUE, UNDEFINED TERMS SUCH AS "HOLISTIC", "PRUDENT APPROACH" AND "TRACEABILITY." AUSTRALIA ARGUED THAT A FOOD CHAIN APPROACH SHOULD NOT BE SADDLED WITH "COLLATERAL" ISSUES SUCH AS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL TREATIES; NOR SHOULD THE FOOD CHAIN TAKE ON ACTIVITIES MORE PROPERLY BELONGING TO THE MARKET (SUCH AS SATISFYING CONSUMER TASTES). MOST COAG MEMBERS FELT THAT "A" FOOD CHAIN APPROACH TO FOOD SAFETY WAS ACCEPTABLE (AND WAS, IN FACT THE APPROACH THAT GUIDED MANY COUNTRIES DOMESTICALLY) BUT EXPRESSED DIFFERING OPINIONS ON THE SCOPE AS PRESENTED BY FAO. THE IMPORTANCE OF SCIENCE-BASED RISK ASSESSMENT WAS ACKNOWLEDGED BY ALL MEMBERS AS WELL AS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CAPACITY BUILDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND THE ROLE OF CODEX, IPPC AND OIE IN ANY FOOD CHAIN APPROACH. HOWEVER, THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND LIKE-MINDED COUNTRIES INDICATED THAT ETHICS AND THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE "FOOD CHAIN APPROACH." CAIRNS GROUP

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INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CEA-01	CIAE-00	COME-00	CTME-00	INL-00
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	INR-00	ITC-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00
	OES-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PER-00	ACE-00	SSO-00
	SS-00	STR-00	TEST-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	EPAE-00	DRL-01
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R 171333Z APR 03  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9322  
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COUNTRIES TOOK THE FLOOR AGAIN TO DISAGREE WITH THIS APPROACH.

FOOD CHAIN -- LINKING BUDGETS WITH PROGRAMS

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110. AS THE COMMITTEE COULD NOT REACH CONSENSUS ON THE DOCUMENT, AUSTRALIA AND U.S. DEL SOUGHT TO ENSURE THAT THE PROPOSED BUDGET (SOME USD 950,000) WOULD NOT BE SPENT ON THE FOOD CHAIN STRATEGY IN THE NEXT BIENNIUM BUT WOULD BE USED INSTEAD FOR HIGHER PRIORITY ITEMS (SUCH AS THE ICPM). THE NEGOTIATED OUTCOME INCLUDES A REQUEST FOR THE SECRETARIAT TO RE-DRAFT THE PAPER AND RE-SUBMIT TO THE

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NEXT COAG SESSION. THE REPORT ALSO NOTES THAT "A FEW MEMBERS FELT THAT THE PROPOSED BUDGET ALLOCATION FOR THIS WORK WOULD NEED TO BE REVIEWED."

111. COMMENT: THE DEEP DISAGREEMENT OVER THE FAO'S PROPOSED STRATEGY FOR A "FOOD CHAIN APPROACH" PRESENTED A NOVEL OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS TO LINK PROGRAMS WITH RESOURCES (OR, IN THIS CASE, TO ATTEMPT TO DENY FUNDING TO A PROGRAM WHICH DID NOT MEET WITH CONSENSUS APPROVAL). NOT SURPRISINGLY, THE EFFORTS OF AUSTRALIA, SUPPORTED BY THE U.S., TO BLOCK FUNDING FOR "FOOD CHAIN" ACTIVITIES PROVOKED A STORM OF PROTESTS (NOT LEAST -- BUT MUFFLED, OF COURSE-- FROM THE SECRETARIAT). RECOGNIZING THAT SUCH

A TACTIC MUST BE USED JUDICIOUSLY, AS IT COULD WELL BE  
TURNED AGAINST ONE'S OWN PRIORITY PROGRAMS, AUSTRALIA AND  
THE U.S. EVENTUALLY BACKED OFF. THE LANGUAGE OF THE  
REPORT MAKES CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT COAG AT NO POINT  
"ENDORSED" THE DOCUMENT. IT ALSO LEAVES AN IMPORTANT  
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TRAIL TO BE FOLLOWED UP ON BY THE UPCOMING PROGRAM AND  
FINANCE COMMITTEES, WHICH ARE THE APPROPRIATE BODIES TO  
TAKE FURTHER ACTION ON THIS ISSUE. END COMMENT.

GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES  
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112. THE FAO'S PROPOSED "FRAMEWORK FOR GOOD AGRICULTURAL  
PRACTICES" (GAP) REVIEWED THE DEVELOPMENT OF A LIST OF  
GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES FOR FAO TO USE IN ITS  
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS WITH MEMBER NATIONS TO  
FURTHER ACTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT. MEMBERS GENERALLY SUPPORTED THE NOTION OF  
GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES ALTHOUGH (WITH THE EXCEPTION  
OF THE EU) THEY REFUSED TO CONSIDER IT A "FRAMEWORK" OR A  
SYSTEM. RATHER, MOST COUNTRIES EMPHASIZED THAT THERE  
WERE DIVERSE WAYS TO APPROACH GAP AND THAT A GAP APPROACH  
SHOULD BE VOLUNTARY, NON-REGULATORY, NOT IMPLY ANY GLOBAL  
STANDARD AND NOT CREATE NEW BARRIERS TO TRADE. THE  
LINKAGE BY THE DELEGATE OF POLAND OF GAP TO  
MULTIFUNCTIONALITY AROUSED CONCERNS IN CAIRNS GROUP AND  
THE U.S. THAT THE GAP "FRAMEWORK" MIGHT BE A STALKING  
HORSE FOR MULTIFUNCTIONALITY. THE PAPER WILL BE  
REVIEWED AT THE NEXT COAG.

SUSTAINABLE RURAL LIVELIHOODS  
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113. MEMBERS GENERALLY SUPPORTED THE WORK OF FAO IN  
INTEGRATING A RURAL LIVELIHOOD APPROACH INTO ITS EXISTING  
PROGRAMS, IN PARTICULAR THE FAO'S SPECIAL PROGRAM FOR  
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FOOD SECURITY (SPFS). RURAL LIVELIHOODS IN THIS INSTANCE  
MEANS PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES THAT HELP EMPOWER RURAL  
COMMUNITIES AND INDIVIDUALS IN DIVERSIFYING RURAL  
INCOMES, SUPPORTING GOOD GOVERNANCE ACTIVITIES, AND  
BUILDING CAPACITY OF SMALL FARMERS AND RURAL BUSINESSES.  
COAG NOTED THAT WORK NEEDED TO FOCUS ON AREAS OF FAO'S  
COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE AND FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS FOR GREATER  
EFFICIENCIES AND COLLABORATION. COAG REQUESTED FURTHER  
INFORMATION ON SUCCESS STORIES WHERE THE LIVELIHOODS  
APPROACH HAS REDUCED RURAL POVERTY. (COMMENT: THE REAL  
SUCCESS STORY HERE IS THAT OF THE UK DELEGATION, WHICH,  
BY STRATEGICALLY PLACING A UK-FUNDED DFID ADVISOR IN FAO  
HAS INTEGRATED THE UK'S MAJOR DEVELOPMENT THEME INTO FAO  
PROGRAMS. END COMMENT.)

AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION AND DECISION SUPPORT TOOLS  
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114. REGRETTABLY THERE WAS NOT MUCH INTEREST OR COMMENT ON  
THIS IMPORTANT AGENDA ITEM. MEMBERS SUPPORTED  
INTENSIFIED WORK IN DEVELOPING AGRO-ENVIRONMENTAL  
INFORMATION. DEVELOPING COUNTRIES' INTERVENTIONS  
STRESSED CAPACITY BUILDING AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER FOR

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INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	CEA-01	CIAE-00	COME-00	CTME-00
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R 171333Z APR 03  
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BETTER USE OF AGRO-ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION AND DATA IN THEIR COUNTRIES. DEVELOPED COUNTRIES' COMMENTS FOCUSED ON BETTER COORDINATION WITHIN EXISTING INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGIES.

BIOSECURITY IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

115. COAG DISCUSSED THE TOPIC OF BIOSECURITY FOR A SECOND TIME. (THE TOPIC WAS ORIGINALLY INTRODUCED AT THE 16TH SESSION OF COAG). THE U.S. RE-EMPHASIZED ITS VIEWS FROM THE 16TH SESSION AND EXPRESSED CONCERNS ABOUT THE VAGUE AND WIDE-RANGING NATURE OF THE DOCUMENT AND THE LACK OF A DEFINITION OF BIOSECURITY. MANY COUNTRIES HIGHLIGHTED THAT CAPACITY BUILDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WERE KEY IN ADDRESSING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES NEEDS FOR ANIMAL HEALTH, PLANT HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY. THE COMMITTEE AGREED THAT NO CHANGE IN THE INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS WAS NEEDED AND REAFFIRMED THE ROLE OF CODEX, IPPC AND OIE (THE INTERNATIONAL OFFICE OF EPIZOOTICS).

PORTAL ON FOOD SAFETY, ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH

116. DURING DISCUSSION OF BIOSECURITY, THE COMMITTEE ALSO ENDORSED THE CONCEPT OF AND FURTHER WORK ON THE U.S.-FUNDED INTERNATIONAL PORTAL ON FOOD SAFETY, ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH AND LOOKED FORWARD TO ITS OFFICIAL LAUNCH. AT THE LAST PLENARY THE BRAZILIAN DELEGATION ASKED FOR AN ADDITIONAL SENTENCE TO BE ADDED TO REPORT: "THE COMMITTEE UNCLASSIFIED

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EXPRESSED ITS UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PORTAL WOULD ONLY INCLUDE SCIENCE-BASED INFORMATION, DATA AND/OR DECISIONS AND GUIDELINES OF AN INTER-GOVERNMENTAL NATURE, AS WELL AS ANY NATIONAL OFFICIAL DATA AND INFORMATION." THE EU OBJECTED TO THE ADDITION. A PROPOSAL BY ERITREA TO DROP "ONLY" WAS ACCEPTED AND THE AMENDED PROPOSAL WAS ADDED TO THE FINAL REPORT.

WHO/FAO STUDY ON DIET AND NUTRITION

117. UNDER OTHER BUSINESS, MEMBERS AND OBSERVERS COMMENTED ON AN INFORMATION DOCUMENT SUMMARIZING THE WHO/FAO REPORT ON DIET, NUTRITION AND THE PREVENTION OF CHRONIC DISEASES. A NUMBER OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT RECOMMENDATIONS ON SUGAR INTAKE COULD HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON SMALL SUGAR PRODUCERS AND THE ECONOMIES OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. OBSERVERS FROM INDUSTRY GROUPS ARGUED FOR SCIENCE-BASED FINDINGS. USDEL INTERVENED TO STATE THAT THE "BEST POSSIBLE SCIENTIFIC AND PUBLIC HEALTH EVIDENCE SHOULD BE THE CORNERSTONE OF THE 2004 GLOBAL STRATEGY ON DIET, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH." WHILE THE REPORT WAS NOT INTENDED TO BE AN ACTION ITEM FOR ANY FAO INTERGOVERNMENTAL BODY, MEMBERS REQUESTED THAT THE SECRETARIAT CONVENE COAG "AS SOON AS POSSIBLE" SO THAT MEMBERS COULD "REVIEW" THE REPORT. COMMENT: NEITHER WE (NOR THE SECRETARIAT) KNOW WHEN THIS WILL BE. THE NEXT MEETING OF COAG IS IN 2005. END COMMENT.

118. SIDE EVENTS

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--AGROECOLOGY: A PRESENTATION OF THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN FAO AND THE INTERNATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE (IPC) OF CSO'S AND NGO'S OF THE WORLD FOOD SUMMIT:FIVE YEARS LATER MEETING (WFS5YL) WORKING TOGETHER TO FURTHER THE CONSIDERATION AND INTEGRATION OF AGROECOLOGY WORK WITHIN FAO. (THE IPC IS NOW RECOGNIZED AS THE CIVIL SOCIETY FOCAL POINT FOR FOLLOW-UP TO THE WFS5YL.) A WORK PLAN FOR THE PARTNERSHIP IS BEING DEVELOPED, INCLUDING ESTABLISHMENT OF AN FAO WORKING GROUP AND THE CONVENING OF A SEMINAR IN SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2003.

COMMENT: FODAG WELCOMES THE INNOVATIVE PARTNERING WITH NGO'S. WE WOULD NOTE, HOWEVER, THE MANY OF THE NGO'S INVOLVED IN THE AGROECOLOGY MOVEMENT ARE VOCALLY ANTI-BIOTECH. WE NEED TO MAKE SURE THAT THE FAO GIVES ADEQUATE SPACE TO NGO'S WITH OTHER POINTS OF VIEW ON THESE ISSUES. END COMMENT.

-- STATUS OF THE FIRST REPORT OF THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES. DURING THE WELL ATTENDED SIDE-EVENT, PARTICIPANTS WERE MADE AWARE OF THE RAPID DECREASE IN ANIMAL GENETIC STOCK, INCLUDING 1,350 BREEDS AT RISK

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ACTION IO-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CEA-01	CIAE-00	COME-00	CTME-00	INL-00
	DODE-00	ITCE-00	WHA-00	SRPP-00	EB-00	EXME-00	EUR-00
	E-00	UTED-00	FDRE-01	VC-00	FRB-00	H-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	ITC-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00

OES-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 DHS-00 OPIC-01 ACE-00 IRM-00  
SSO-00 SS-00 STR-00 TEST-00 TRSE-00 USIE-00 EPAE-00  
DRL-01 G-00 SAS-00 /010W  
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R 171333Z APR 03  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9324  
USDA FAS WASHDC 2626  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
USMISSION GENEVA  
USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA

UNCLAS SECTION 05 OF 06 ROME 001658

SIPDIS

FROM FODAG

STATE FOR IO/EDA WINNICK AND KOTOK  
USDA/FAS FOR REICH AND HUGHES  
MEXICO CITY FOR BRAKEL

E.O. 12958: N/A

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WITH ONE TO TWO LOST ON A WEEKLY BASIS.

COMMENT: THE SECRETARIAT'S COMMENTS ON A POSSIBLE TREATY ON ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES INDICATED THAT THEY MAY BE WAY AHEAD OF MEMBERS ON THE DESIRABILITY OF SUCH A TREATY. FODAG HAS FOLLOWED UP WITH THE SECRETARIAT TO POINT OUT THAT THE LAST COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES SESSION DID NOT ENDORSE ANY GROUNDWORK BEING DONE ON A TREATY. END COMMENT.

-- SARD (SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT) INITIATIVE STAKEHOLDER DESIGN CONSULTATION: THE SARD INITIATIVE IS MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PROCESS DESIGNED TO DEVELOP AN SUPPORT PARTNERSHIPS AND INITIATIVES TO STRENGTHEN ON THE GROUND ACTIONS TO SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT. NEXT STEPS INCLUDE DEVELOPMENT OF A 4-YEAR PROGRAM OF WORK WITH A POSSIBLE PROGRESS REPORT TO COAG IN 2005; DEVELOPMENT OF AND SEARCH FOR FUNDING OF PROJECT PROPOSALS; ESTABLISHMENT OF A COORDINATION TEAM TO LEAD COLLABORATION WITH FAO; AND CONSULTATIONS WITH KEY PLAYERS, INCLUDING INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS.

-- OUTCOME OF THE THIRD WORLD WATER FORUM (CO-SPONSORED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN AND FAO): JAPAN NOTED THAT THE AGRICULTURE AND WATER DECLARATION WAS ONE OF THE MORE SUCCESSFUL ASPECTS OF THE FORUM AND THAT THE FORUM WOULD HAVE RECEIVED MORE PRESS IF IT HAD NOT BEEN FOR THE U.S. ATTACK ON IRAQ.

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-- BRIDGING THE RURAL DIGITAL DIVIDE - INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION IN SUPPORT OF RURAL LIVELIHOODS: THE PRESENTATION EXAMINED "A NEW APPROACH" TO BRIDGE THE INFORMATION GAP FOR RURAL STAKEHOLDER WHO ARE LACK ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES WHICH CAN HELP ALLEVIATE HUNGER AND POVERTY IN RURAL AREAS BY BRINGING THEM INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF INFORMATION.

-- WORLD BANK ASSESSMENT ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: ROBERT WATSON OF THE WORLD BANK PRESENTED THE OUTLINE OF THE PROPOSED ASSESSMENT ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS. IT APPEARED FROM THE PRESENTATION THAT THE ASSESSMENT'S PROPOSED SCOPE HAS MOVED TOWARDS MORE FOCUS ON TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO AGRICULTURE IN THE FUTURE AND DE-EMPHASIZED OTHER NON-MARKET AND TRADE ISSUES. FAO IS ONE OF THE MAIN PARTNERS LEADING THE ASSESSMENT.

-- FAO AND BIOTECHNOLOGY: THE HEAD OF FAO'S INTERDEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP ON BIOTECHNOLOGY, JAMES DARGIE (ALSO DIRECTOR OF FAO'S JOINT DIVISION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY IN VIENNA) PRESENTED FAO'S BIOTECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS. THE PRESENTATION WAS VERY BALANCED AND VERY SUPPORTIVE OF BIOTECHNOLOGY.

COMMENT: MISSION MEMBERS WERE FAVORABLY STRUCK BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH DARGIE WAS PREPARED TO CHALLENGE BIOTECH DOUBTERS AND NAYSAYERS IN THE QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD WITH STRONG AND UNEQUIVOCAL ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF BIOTECH.

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19. THE NEXT REGULAR SESSION OF COAG IS SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE IN ROME IN EARLY APRIL 2005. COAG SUPPORTED THE SUGGESTION OF THE DELEGATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA THAT FAO REPORT TO THE FINANCE AND PROGRAM COMMITTEES ON THE POSSIBILITY OF HOLDING COAG AND THE COMMITTEE ON COMMODITY PROBLEMS BACK TO BACK WITH A VIEW TO FINDING SAVINGS AND IMPROVING EFFICIENCY.



COMMENT - IS IT THE TOPIC OR THE PRESENTATION?  
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120. COAG PROVED ONCE AGAIN TO BE THE MOST POLITICIZED OF  
FAO'S TECHNICAL COMMITTEES. ONLY ONE ITEM OF THE AGENDA  
RATED CONSENSUS ENDORSEMENT (AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL  
INFORMATION AND DECISION SUPPORT TOOLS). THE REMAINDER  
WERE EITHER SENT BACK FOR RE-WRITING ("THE FOOD CHAIN")  
OR VIEWED AS TOO FLAWED TO WARRANT AN UNQUALIFIED  
"ENDORSEMENT." WHILE TRADE ISSUES CANNOT BE ENTIRELY  
AVOIDED, WE BELIEVE THAT THE FAO SHOULD FOCUS ON BOTTOM-  
UP AGRICULTURAL INITIATIVES, RATHER THAN CHURNING OUT  
GLOBAL "FRAMEWORKS" AND "STRATEGIES" (ESPECIALLY WHEN  
THESE INCLUDE A THINLY VEILED "PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE"  
DRESSED UP AS "A PRUDENT APPROACH.") WE HOPE THAT U.S.  
AND AUSTRALIAN EFFORTS TO CURTAIL FUNDING OF THE

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	E-00	UTED-00	FDRE-01	VC-00	FRB-00	H-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	ITC-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00
	OES-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	ACE-00	SSO-00	SS-00
	STR-00	TEST-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	DRL-01	G-00	SAS-00
	/010W						

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R 171333Z APR 03  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9325  
USDA FAS WASHDC 2627  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
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UNCLAS SECTION 06 OF 06 ROME 001658

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CONTROVERSIAL "FOOD CHAIN" APPROACH SENT A WARNING SIGNAL  
TO THE SECRETARIAT IN THIS REGARD. FODAG SUGGESTS THAT  
THIS POINT NEED TO BE MADE WITH FAO SENIOR MANAGEMENT AT  
EVERY APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY. TAMLYN

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